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January 11, 2019

Amanda Sahm '18 Recognized with Senior Scholastic and Scholar-Athlete Awards

Amanda Sahm '18, of Marion, Iowa, is the first exercise science graduate of Gardner-Webb University to be accepted into a four-year Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) program. While accomplishing this milestone, Sahm earned the Senior Scholastic Achievement Award, which is given to a graduating senior with the highest grade point average. A member of the GWU volleyball team, she was also named the Big South 2018 Volleyball Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

She believes her academic and scholarly accomplishments are the result of the encouragement and teaching methods of her GWU professors. "Dr. Jeff Hartman and Dr. David Granniss place reasonably high expectations on their students, so they can succeed in the real world," Sahm offered. "Not only did classes prepare me for graduate school, but also the required professionalism courses and assignments helped me learn how to display myself in a professional setting. Overall, the exercise science program pushed me to see the best in myself."



Sahm also benefited from her psychology and sociology classes. “It is intriguing to learn how and why people are the way they are,” she observed. “I learned a lot in those classes that I will be able to utilize in my career, because all careers ultimately involve people.”

When she began her studies at Gardner-Webb, Sahm couldn’t decide whether to pursue occupational therapy or dentistry. Majoring in exercise science would provide her the pre-requisites for both graduate programs. She chose dentistry after completing an internship in a dental office. “I was able to see the beauty in helping people improve their quality of life by giving them a healthy smile to be confident about,” Sahm related. “I worked with all the dental specialties, and I loved what I saw and all the new stuff I had to learn. I know it’s a profession that is going to constantly challenge me and keep me learning every day.”



Hartman, Granniss and other professors gave her advice on completing her graduate school application and helped her prepare for interviews. “Countless times they would take the time out of their day to help me with my application, an assignment, or just talk about life plans,” she related. “Many professors and staff members were willing to help me make my application strong. They gave me the tools and confidence to display who I was on paper and to answer interview questions efficiently.”

Sahm was introduced to the GWU volleyball program and the Department of Exercise Science by 2016 alumna Anna Pashkova. Pashkova is also from Iowa, and the two athletes had played in the same volleyball club. When Sahm visited GWU, she was impressed by the caring people and beautiful campus.

“I valued the ability to meet so many new and wonderful people, whether classmates, teammates, staff, or professors,” Sahm asserted. “I knew I always had a support system. Also, being so far from home, I became independent and learned who I truly was. Gardner-Webb provided a comfortable place for me to balance my academics, athletics, social life, and spirituality. I have many lifelong friends and lasting memories.”

If you are interested in learning more about the programs offered by the Department of Exercise Science, [click here](#).